UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3629	

DATE MAILED: 06/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 10/03)

		Application No.		Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary		09/945,469		LASALLE ET AL.
		Examiner		Art Unit
		Igor Borissov		3629

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>03</u> MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *23 March 2004*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-44* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-44* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 12 is objected to because of the following informalities: examiner believes that a phrase *"include at least:"* should be substituted to *"include at least one of:"*. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1, 7, 11, 13-16, 17-20, 29, 31-34 and 37-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 is confusing, because phrases *"an inquiry receiving component"*, *"a response receiving component"*, *"a confirming component"* and *"a verification component"* are confusing, and are not clearly defined. It is not clear whether these components are software modules, or hardware units.

Claims 7, 11, 13-16, 17-20, 29, 31-34, 37-41 and 44 are confusing, because the terms *"capability"*, *"ability"*, *"can"*; *"capable"* and *"able"* indicate potential, not an actual method steps.

Claims 13 and 37. It is not clear what does the phrase *"capability domain"* actually contemplate.

Claim 37. It is not clear what does the phrase *"an activity trust domain"* actually contemplate.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 13-16, 40-41, 17-20 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed transitive trust network system does not recite a limitation in the technological arts. The independently claimed elements: *an entity trust list containing at least one characteristic of at least two entities; and a transactional trust list containing a parameter relative to an exchange between at least two entities through at least one degree of separation between entities; the at least one parameter being indicative of an action that a trusted party can perform; a capability domain and activity trust level database for each of the at least two entities*, are abstract ideas which can be assessed mentally without interaction of a physical structure. The phrases *"an entity trust list"* and *"activity trust level database"* may be understood as merely keeping notes about a subject of interest. However, the claimed invention must utilize technology in a non-trivial manner (*Ex parte Bowman, 61 USPQ2d 1665, 1671 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 2001)*).

Because the independently claimed invention is directed to an abstract idea which does not recite a limitation in the technological arts, those claims and claims depending from them, are not permitted under 35 USC 101 as being related to non-statutory subject matter. However, in order to consider those claims in light of the prior art, examiner will assume that those claims recite statutorily permitted subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 102(e) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-21, 23 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tarrant (US 2002/0128939).

Tarrant teaches a method and system for sharing investor information over an electronic network, comprising:

Claim 1, a computer including a processor and a database for storing data and instructions [0021]. Information as to content of the instructions, including: *receiving an inquiry; receiving a response; indicating availability of establishing new relationship; indicating a trust level about the sought entity by the intermediate entity; and determining whether information can be shared*, is non-functional language and given no patentable weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 2. Said system including a network, a computer including a processor and a database for storing data and instructions [0021], said database containing a list of users and information related to levels of trustworthiness [0047]. Information as to content of the database and instructions, including: *characteristics of entities; a level of trust being gauged by the at least one characteristic; and a parameter relative to an exchange between two entities,* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in

terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582,

531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed

apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from

a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the

claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as

described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the

prior art.

Claim 3, see claim 2.

Claims 4 and 5, said system wherein the network is the Internet [0026].

Claim 6, see claim 2.

Claims 7-12, see claim 2.

Claim 13. Said system including a database for storing data and instructions

[0021], said database containing a list of users and information related to levels of

trustworthiness [0047]. Information as to content of the database and instructions,

including: *characteristics of entities; a level of trust being gauged by the at least one*

characteristic; and a parameter relative to an exchange between two entities; a

parameter being indicative of an action that a trusted party can perform; a capability

domain for each of the at least two entities, is non-functional language and given no

functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior

art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ

582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed

apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from

a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the

claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as

described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the

prior art.

Claim 14, see claim 13. Information as to *each respective role defines a*

respective function is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims

Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 15, see claim 13. Information as to *each respective level of* trust *in the plurality of levels of trust defines a respective level of trust between the entities* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 16, see claim 13. Information as to *respective business process is associated with each combination of a respective role and a respective trust level* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 40, see claim 13. Information as to *the corresponding business process is selected from a group consisting of a design process, a source process a plan process and a service process* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 41, see claim 13. Information as to *the entity trust list includes an overall trust score between two entities* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 17. Said system including a database for storing data and instructions [0021], said database containing a list of users and information related to levels of trustworthiness [0047]. Information as to content of the database and instructions, including: *a capability domain for each of the at least two entities; a plurality of levels of trust and a plurality of entity roles,* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in

terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 18, see claim 17. Information as to *each respective level of* trust *in the plurality of levels of trust defines a respective level of trust between the entities* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 19, see claim 17. Information as to *each respective role defines a respective function* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 20, see claim 17. Information as to *respective business process is associated with each combination of a respective role and a respective trust level* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim 21. Said method, comprising: sending an inquiry to an intermediate entity; receiving a response from the intermediate entity indicating an existing relationship between the sought entity and an intermediate entity; establishing a new business relationship with the sought entity based on the response, the response being indicative or a trust level of a sought entity and of a corresponding valuation criterion (trustworthiness) [0018]; [0021].

Claim 23. Said method, comprising: sending an inquiry to an intermediate entity entity; receiving a response from the intermediate entity indicating an existing relationship between the sought entity and an intermediate entity; establishing a new business relationship with the sought entity based on the response, the response being indicative or a trust level of a sought entity and of a corresponding valuation criterion (trustworthiness) [0018]; [0021].

Claim 44, said system including databases containing entities-related information, wherein said entities are identified as a members of a hierarchy of sources organized by level of trustworthiness [0018]; [0021], and information related to transactions [0063]. Information as to specific content of said databases, and information as to *storing a trust level for each directly interconnected entity and at least one corresponding valuation criterion for determining the trust level* is non-functional language and given no functional weight. Claims Directed to an Apparatus must be

distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, *In re Danly* 263 F.2d 844, 847, 120 USPQ 582, 531 (CCPA 1959).

A claim containing a "recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus" if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1657 (bd Pat. App. & Inter. 1987). Thus as described the limitations of the claim do not distinguish the claimed apparatus from the prior art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 22, 24, 30, 35-36 and 42-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarrant in view of Krysiak et al. (US 2002/0078003).

Claim 22. Tarrant teaches all the limitations of claim 22, except specifying the degree of separations between the entities.

Krysiak et al. teach a method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains, wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

Claim 24. Tarrant teaches: receiving at one entity a contact identifying another entity; identifying said another entity as a member of a trusted entities list; establishing a business relationship with the sought entity based on the information being indicative of the level of trustworthiness of said another entity [0018]; [0021]. Information as to *first* and *second* entity is non-functional language and given no patentable weight. Non-functional descriptive material <u>cannot</u> render non-obvious an invention that would otherwise have been obvious. *See: In re Gulack 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983) In re Dembiczak 175 F.3d 994, 1000, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1999).* The specific example of non-functional descriptive material is provided in MPEP 2106, Section VI: (example 3) a process that differs from the prior art only with respect to non-functional descriptive material that cannot alter <u>how</u> the process steps are to be performed. The method steps, disclosed in Tarrant would be performed the same regardless if said entities are *first* or *second* entities, or not.

However, Tarrant does not specifically teach the degree of separations between the entities.

Krysiak et al. teach said method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains, wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

Claim 42, said method, wherein each of trusted entities is associated with hierarchical levels of trustworthiness (which appears to have four levels: A, B, C and D), thereby obviously indicating a predetermined minimum trust level (Tarrant; [0045]; [0047]).

Claims 30. Tarrant teaches: receiving at one entity a contact identifying another entity; checking a list of trusted entities for identifying said another entity as a member of a trusted entities list; establishing a business relationship with the sought entity based

on the information being indicative of the level of trustworthiness of said another entity [0018]; [0021]. Information as to *first, second and third* entity is non-functional language and given no patentable weight. Non-functional descriptive material <u>cannot</u> render non-obvious an invention that would otherwise have been obvious. *See: In re Gulack 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983) In re Dembiczak 175 F.3d 994, 1000, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1999).*

However, Tarrant does not specifically teach the degree of separations between the entities.

Krysiak et al. teach said method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains, wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

Claim 43, said method, wherein each of trusted entities is associated with hierarchical levels of trustworthiness (which appears to have four levels: A, B, C and D), thereby obviously indicating a predetermined minimum trust level (Tarrant; [0045]; [0047]).

Claim 35. Tarrant teaches: receiving at one entity a contact identifying another entity; checking a list of trusted entities for matching said another entity with a list of member of a trusted entities list; establishing a business relationship with the sought entity based on the information being indicative of the level of trustworthiness of said another entity [0018]; [0021]. Information as to *first, second and third* entity is non-functional language and given no patentable weight. Non-functional descriptive material <u>cannot</u> render non-obvious an invention that would otherwise have been obvious. *See: In re Gulack 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983) In re Dembiczak 175 F.3d 994, 1000, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1999).*

However, Tarrant does not specifically teach the degree of separations between the entities.

Krysiak et al. teach said method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains, wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

Furthermore, Tarrant and Krysiak et al. do not specifically teach forwarding a "Do You Know" query to further companies. Examiner points out that there is no indication in the specification that said feature ("Do You Know" query) provides the advantage over the prior art. Without such indication, it appears that providing "Do You Know" query is a matter of business choice.

Claim 36. Tarrant teaches: receiving at one entity a contact identifying another entity; checking a list of trusted entities for identifying said another entity as a member of a trusted entities list; establishing a business relationship with the sought entity based on the information being indicative of the level of trustworthiness of said another entity [0018]; [0021]. Information as to *first and second* entity is non-functional language and given no patentable weight. Non-functional descriptive material <u>cannot</u> render non-obvious an invention that would otherwise have been obvious. *See: In re Gulack 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983) In re Dembiczak 175 F.3d 994, 1000, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1999).*

However, Tarrant does not specifically teach the degree of separations between the entities.

Krysiak et al. teach said method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains, wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

Claims 25-29, 31-34 and 37-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarrant and Krysiak et al. in view of Smith et al. (US 2002/0152086).

Claims 25-29. Tarrant and Krysiak et al. teach all the limitations of claims 25-29, including a data base having a plurality of levels of trust (Tarrant; [0018]), except for plurality of entity roles, wherein each respective role in the plurality of roles defines a respective function that one entity fulfills to another entity.

Smith et al. teach a method and system for controlling a lifestyle of an electronic contract for a business relationship, wherein roles are associated with business relationship elements [0018].

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant and Krysiak et al. to include associating roles with business relationship so that each respective role defines a respective function that one entity fulfills to another entity, as disclosed in Smith et al., because it would increase the degree of trust of users in conducting business over the computer network using a mechanism that tie the business relationship to terms and conditions of a legal contract (Smith et al. [0007]).

Claim 37. Tarrant teaches a database having a plurality of levels of trust [0018]. except for plurality of entity roles, wherein each respective role in the plurality of roles defines a respective function that one entity fulfills to another entity.

However, Tarrant does not specifically teach the degree of separations between the entities, and a plurality of entity roles.

Krysiak et al. teach said method and system for identifying information sources based on one or more trust networks associated with one or more knowledge domains,

wherein the multiple path connections (degree of separation) is provided for identifying the most trusted path connection (Figs. 11-14; [0070] – [0076]).

Smith et al. teach said method and system for controlling a lifestyle of an electronic contract for a business relationship, wherein roles are associated with business relationship elements [0018].

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant to include identifying multiple path connections for identifying the most trusted path connection, as disclosed in Krysiak et al, because it would allow users to collect the most trusted information about sought entity.

And it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Tarrant and Krysiak et al. to include associating roles with business relationship so that each respective role defines a respective function that one entity fulfills to another entity, as disclosed in Smith et al., because it would increase the degree of trust of users in conducting business over the computer network using a mechanism that tie the business relationship to terms and conditions of a legal contract (Smith et al. [0007]).

Claims 38-39, see claim 37.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 4/5/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to the applicant's argument that Tarrant does not disclose a valuation criterion, examiner points out that Tarrant specifically teaches a "level of trustworthiness" used for evaluation of an entity [0018].

In response to the applicant's argument that Tarrant does not disclose a level of trust being gauged by the at least one characteristic, examiner stipulates that Tarrant

discloses four levels of trust being ranked based on reliability of information submitted by users (investors) [0047].

In response to the applicant's argument that Tarrant does not show "Do You Know" query, examiner maintains that without indicating in the specification the advantage of said query over the prior art, the use of said query appears to be a matter of business choice.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure (see form PTO-892).

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Igor Borissov at telephone number (703) 305-4649.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 872-9306.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's Supervisor, John Weiss, can be reached at (703) 308- 2702.
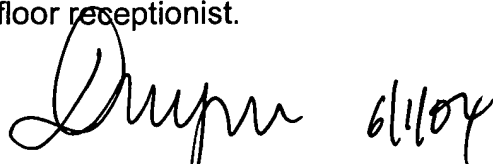
Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306   [Official communications; including After Final

communications labeled "Box AF"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.

DEAN T. NGUYEN
PRIMARY EXAMINER